

# FIGHTING FIRE FROM HEAD TO TOE

**Helmet** with a wide brim, ear flaps, and flip-down face shield. These protect firefighters from falling objects, scalding water, and burning embers.

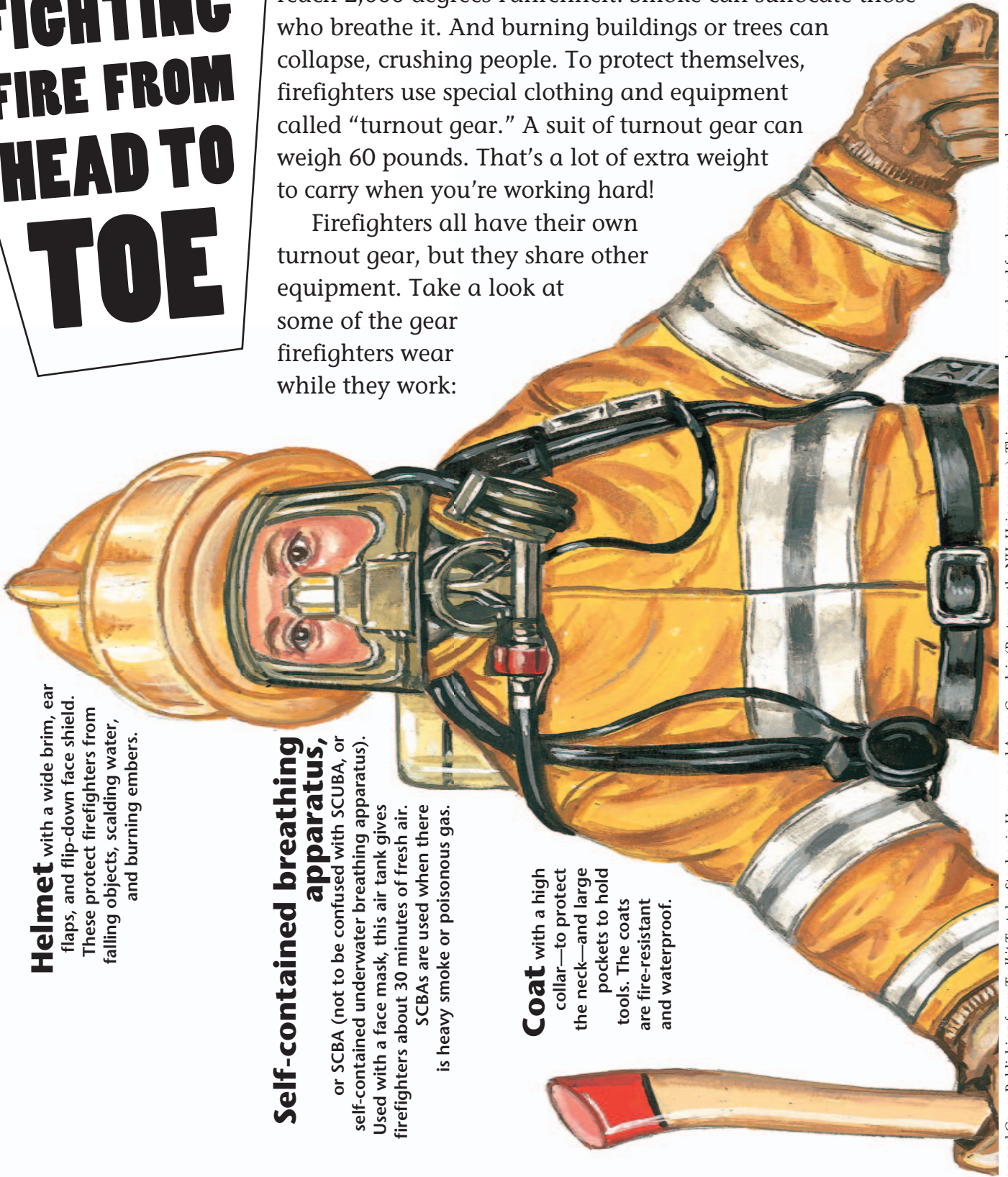
## Self-contained breathing apparatus,

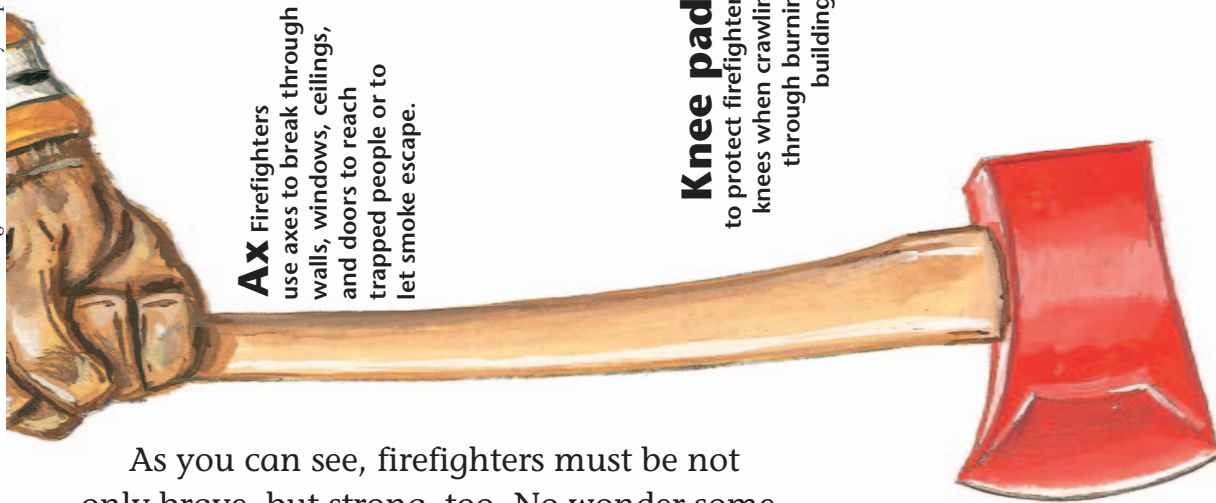
or SCBA (not to be confused with SCUBA, or self-contained underwater breathing apparatus). Used with a face mask, this air tank gives firefighters about 30 minutes of fresh air. SCBAs are used when there is heavy smoke or poisonous gas.

**Coat** with a high collar—to protect the neck—and large pockets to hold tools. The coats are fire-resistant and waterproof.

Fighting fires is dangerous business. Fire temperatures can reach 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit. Smoke can suffocate those who breathe it. And burning buildings or trees can collapse, crushing people. To protect themselves, firefighters use special clothing and equipment called “turnout gear.” A suit of turnout gear can weigh 60 pounds. That’s a lot of extra weight to carry when you’re working hard!

Firefighters all have their own turnout gear, but they share other equipment. Take a look at some of the gear firefighters wear while they work:





**Ax** Firefighters use axes to break through walls, windows, ceilings, and doors to reach trapped people or to let smoke escape.

**Knee pads** to protect firefighters' knees when crawling through burning buildings.

**Gloves** made of leather and fire-resistant materials. The gloves are thick, strong, and flexible.

**Pants** with wide suspenders, also fire-resistant and waterproof. The suspenders help keep heavy, wet pants from falling down.

**Boots** made of rubber or leather. Steel plates on the bottom protect firefighters' feet from nails, broken glass, and sharp sticks. They also have nonskid bottoms so the firefighter won't slip on wet floors.

As you can see, firefighters must be not only brave, but strong, too. No wonder some firefighters lift weights in their spare time!

Adapted from an article by Ruth L. Spurgeon  
Illustrated by Howard Friedman